

583 seen how the husband makes a payment of *tsera* to the mother
437 and close clan relatives of the bride, and how he is assisted
by his own clan relatives in collecting the necessary payment.
But the payment could in no way be considered a purchase.
It has the binding force of a rite, and has the same function
that the church or court-house has in the marriage rites of
our culture. The marriage of a girl involves no loss to her
clan. Residence is matrilocal; the community receives a
new member and hence a new worker; the clan relatives
receive frequent gifts of fish and services in the garden from
the husband. No family marries off a daughter to receive
the payment, yet she could not be married without the pay-
ment any more than a girl in a Western civilization could be
married without a church or legal ceremony of some kind.¹

437 We can see how the principles of payment and reciprocity
183 are much more than economic laws, operating exclusively
in the realm of barter, but are instead forces underlying the
whole culture. Nothing, with the exception of food between
kindred and friends, can be given or done for nothing.

TRADE BETWEEN GROUPS—SALE OF A *MALANGGAN*

438 The principle of reciprocity applies to group as well as to
individual, and is brought out in the sale of a *malanggan*,
as described below. This transaction comes under the
heading of trade, and is the sale of the right to make a ritual
carving and the rites connected with it. The *malanggan* and
its significance in mortuary rites are described in Chapter
VIII. Here only the economic import of the sale is noted.

Poinbi and Kanot, of the village of Logagon, about twenty-
five miles from Lesu, and belonging to another linguistic

¹ When I described our marriage customs to my native friends, they were quite scandalized at the lack of payment, and asked how it could be a true marriage. They were almost equally shocked at the Continental custom of the bride bringing a dowry. One native compared a Christian marriage with no payment to the mating of pigs.

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although she is not good-looking by any standards, native or otherwise. While she works she usually keeps a small mirror near by, into which she constantly looks. She has a peculiarly elongated face with a projecting chin. One man whom she had angered, rather aptly said that her face is like a horse. She replied that one gets a face from one's father. She had one father, and so has his face. Her tormentor had another father, and therefore another face. But although she gave this reasonable retort, her vanity had been deeply hurt, and she never forgave the man. 159

Her disposition is warm and impulsive, quick to anger and easily appeased. One day a wild bush pig strolled into the village, and at the request of many of the natives my cook-boy shot him. At the report of the gun Taiti burst into tears. Later she was twitted on her tears, and she replied that she was sorry for the pig.

She lies rather frequently, but has a subtle distinction of her own. She refers to one man who lies, and says that he looks you straight in the face while he lies. But, she continues, when she lies her "eyes run away," and so her lies are not so bad. As a matter of fact they are more in the nature of small fibs.

She is ambitious and wants to do things that native women never even think of, and is always making plans about how she will help me in my work, drawing up elaborate schemes of what she will do. But finally she has to leave to join a half-caste husband.

She is a type all her own, and a peculiar product of white contact.

SUMMARY

The brief life histories are of interest in that they show somewhat the variations occurring within the general pattern. It is the rule that marriage rites follow immediately after the 159 183 ●

159 rites for the first menses. But individuals do not always follow
183 this rule. Some women delay it for a short time, and personal choice only may be the reason for the delay, or there may be some external circumstances causing it. One woman has one husband for life, and another changes mates several times. And so on.

Since there is variation within the general pattern of life, we might be expected to find a large degree of it within the sexual life, which while it grows out of fundamental biological impulses is overlaid with so many diverse sentiments. Here we find no simple and perfectly logical system. Instead there are contradictions, variations, complexities, and simplicity too. Even the structure is not rigid. We find monogamy, polygamy, and polyandry. There are repressions—half the women are forbidden to the men—and at the same time there is the freedom of extra-marital intercourse. Affectionate fondness in family life is common, and wife-beating also happens in the same family. The sentiment of jealousy is sometimes present and at other times absent. Some unions last a lifetime, and others are quickly broken up. No logical non-variable scheme is found here.

But one may abstract a few generalities which have a more or less universal application. There is first a keen enjoyment in sexual intercourse, which begins almost immediately after puberty, and which is indulged rather freely within the limits of the rule of exogamy. Marriage is to rear children and to maintain a household. If it is not maintained, if either partner neglects his economic duties, divorce occurs. But the family is something more than an economic unit. For divorce also occurs when one mate has tired of the other and prefers or is in love with someone else. There is love, or whatever we call that group of sentiments which surround the biological need for intercourse. A woman in love is lost to the world; she neglects her everyday duties, and thinks and dreams of no one except the beloved. All

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of which is not so different from the picture of a woman in love in any other part of the world. Beside love and passion, there is also affection, which is seen in the relationship between mates, and which comes out so clearly in times of illness or other crises. Thus in the sexual life of these Melanesians occurs the interplay of instincts, emotions, and sentiments which appear to be universal.

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CHAPTER IX

THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY

FAMILY VERSUS CLAN SENTIMENTS

- 183 In our observation of the behaviour of the Lesu people we
593 have noted social patterns and at the same time variations
614 from them. But a distinction must first be made within
the social patterns themselves. Some are highly ritualized
and others are non-ritual. Most of the ritualized behaviour
is concerned with the clan and the moiety. It is the clan
and moiety members which function as a unit at marriage,
death, and other important rites. While family life follows
along more or less customary procedure, there is very little
ritual connected with it. Family sentiments are apparently
so strong and fundamental that they do not need ritual
to reinforce them or to make them into behaviour patterns.
On the other hand, ritual seems to be necessary to keep
clan sentiments active. The family non-ritualized sentiments
sometimes even override the clan's highly standardized
rules, as when a father frequently teaches his magical spells
to his son rather than to his maternal nephew. Or the family
sentiments may sometimes function more actively than the
clan standardized ones. When Pulong was ill, her husband
was much more concerned and worried than her brother,
although, if she had died, the latter would have had charge
of the mortuary rites. The sentiments which develop in the
family seem to be stronger and perhaps more fundamental
than those which surround the clan. For the family sentiments
exist unaided by ritual, while the clan ones apparently must
have the ritual.

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FORMATION AND FUNCTIONING OF SOCIAL PATTERNS

It is fairly easy to pick out the social patterns and see how they have been formed. All the units of the social organization—the family, clan, moiety, village, hamlet—are agents in the socialization of the individual, and these same units foster the social patterns of behaviour and the social sentiments which underlie them. For instance, the principle, or sentiment of reciprocity functions through the ritual exchange of gifts between members of different clans, moieties, and villages. Within the family, too, the same principle of reciprocity functions in the exchange of services between mates, as it does also in the exchange of currency for sexual favours in extra-marital relationships. The clan regulates maternal descent and inheritance and matrilineal residence, which set certain patterns of behaviour. The clan also provides the structure for much of the political and economic organization, in that it is the important old men of each clan who are the leaders of the community. Again, it is the members of a clan who share in joint economic responsibilities. The maternal uncle takes the responsibility for providing feasts for his sister's children during their infancy. It is the clan relatives of a groom who assist him in collecting the marriage payment, and it is the bride's clan relatives who receive the payment. In a similar way, it is the clan relatives of a dead person who take the responsibility of providing the proper mortuary rites. The family, too, functions as an economic unit on a smaller scale. It is also the family, clan, and moiety which give form to the kinship system, for a native receives his place in the kinship system through his position in these groups. So one could continue almost indefinitely to show how institutions by their particular form provide the mould for social patterns of behaviour.

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BASIC PRINCIPLES

182 Underlying these social behaviour patterns of Lesu
 183 appear to be certain fundamental principles, the most
 outstanding of which is the one of reciprocity. From the
 most elaborate economic transactions to the settlement of
 petty quarrels reciprocity is the dominant motif. Thus
 when Kaptan quarrelled with his wife's brother and received
 a blow on the chin from him, it was suggested that if Kaptan
 be allowed to give his brother-in-law a similar blow the
 quarrel would be ended. Ordinary quarrels are ended by
 an exchange of equal amounts of *tsera*. The reciprocal
 gift exchange has already been commented on in detail.
 Trading, in which no profit occurs, is also reciprocal in its
 action, in that, for example, a person is obligated to buy a
 pig from a man who had previously purchased one from
 him. All services, from house-building to sexual favours,
 must be paid for. For everything there must be a recompense.¹ This system of reciprocity makes for a nice balance
 in the workings of the society, and it might be correlated
 with the duality of structure, the moiety system. Or both
 these, the duality of structure and the principle of reciprocity,
 might be the expressions of a still more fundamental social
 law, which in turn may be linked with the biological divi-
 sions of the members of society into two sexes. Here in Lesu
 the two sexes complement each other socially as well as
 biologically, and competition between them does not exist.
 The division of labour and responsibilities between men
 and women makes for the same balance in their relationship
 that we find in trade when equal objects are exchanged.

¹ Professor Thurnwald in this connection says: "The idea of requital, like that of remuneration, appears to be one of the original reactions of mankind. When applied to a wrong inflicted, the result is the blood feud, and when applied to gifts the reaction takes the form of exchange or the development of trade" (Thurnwald, Richard, *Economics in Primitive Societies*, Oxford Press. In press.)

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There appears to be some kind of spontaneous and complementary duality which is expressed in various ways, through the moieties, in economic transactions, in the reciprocity underlying all social relations, and in the complementary nature, of relations (both social and sexual) between men and women. That this duality functions so freely in Lesu may be one reason for the relatively complete integration of society there. 182 183

As a mainspring of action the desire for prestige is most important. Without prestige a man (or a woman) in Lesu is like an uninhabited house. To have prestige among his fellows, a man makes the elaborate *malanggan* rites, and for the same reason he gives elaborate feasts on all the other ritual occasions. It is the desire for prestige that makes him obey the many social taboos and rules. To be gossiped about in a derogatory manner, to have it said that one has no wealth, that one has infringed even a minor aspect of the social code, is to bring disgrace. This aversion to even what appears as trifling but degrading gossip is well illustrated in the following incident. There is much talk in the village because Tsengali's pig has broken into Murri's garden and eaten much taro. Murri displays no particular anger, and appears undisturbed, but Tsengali is very much annoyed because of all the talk that the incident has occasioned. So he announces that he is going to Kabil, where his brother lives, to get a pig and give it to Murri to stop the talk. But Murri tells him that this would be foolish, "to eat a pig for nothing," and that Tsengali should not give him the pig. Instead Murri declares that the incident is ended, and that there should be no more talk. The affair is ended. It is interesting to note that in this incident it was the transgressor who was annoyed because of the blow to his prestige and not the offended man who had suffered a loss of taro. 554 181

At the same time, these men who are so eager for prestige disparage themselves and belittle their contribu- 511

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be due to the fact that he follows a family sentiment rather than a clan rule, or in other cases because he follows some whim of his own personality which does not fit in with any of the social patterns. It has been of interest to note the degree of individuality allowed in such a relatively standardized society as we find in New Ireland. 181

INDIVIDUAL VARIATIONS

The question arises as to how far all the individuals participate in the institutional and social modes of behaviour. I observed how rigid is the rule of sexual division of labour, how a Melanesian girl does not make a decision on what career she will follow, but carries on the traditional feminine role of her society—marriage, gardening, cooking; how custom and tradition play such a large role in determining the native's behaviour and beliefs that, for instance, when the native lacks full confidence in his undertaking, he uses magic; how it is customary for the native to build a certain type of house; how the desire for prestige is the dominating motive in much of native conduct. At the same time, as my study became more intimate and detailed, I became increasingly aware that all the individuals were not carrying out these social patterns to the same degree. I also learned that the natives themselves were fully cognizant of this fact, and took these individual variations quite for granted. For example, one of my best and most trustworthy native informants gave me as a rule that magical knowledge is handed down in the maternal line. When I later pointed out to him that half of the magicians in the village had received their magical spell from their fathers, my native friend shrugged his shoulders a bit impatiently and said (freely translated): "But I thought you knew that there are exceptions to the rules!" He had taken it for granted that 183

- 183 I understood this, and was rather surprised when I somewhat naively indicated the exceptions.

183 In order to bring out the differences between the social
591 and individual patterns of behaviour, it is necessary to take concrete instances of the former and describe the individual variations from each one. There is, for instance, the general rule of behaviour, that a man upon marriage should come to live in the hamlet and village of his wife. And many men follow this pattern, but there are others—a minority—who for personal reasons do not. There are examples of men who settle in their wife's hamlet and later move away for personal reasons. Kaptan, who came originally from a bush village and settled in his wife's hamlet, Onel, grew very irritated at the way his wife's relatives constantly interfered with his affairs, and so left Onel and built a house for himself and wife at Penguli, where a very good friend of his lived.

Another man went to live in his wife's village about thirty-five miles away from his own, and then divorced her because he was tired of walking back and forth to his own village, where he went for rites, funerals, and other important occasions. After his divorce he married a woman from his own village.

183 The rule of maternal descent, that a child belongs to
611 the clan and moiety of his mother, is rigid, and as far as I know never broken. But a corollary of the same rule, namely, that property, material and immaterial, stay within the clan, is frequently not kept. Sola, who is famed as a fishing magician, learned his magic from his father; and Bullagot, the old rain magician, says that he will teach his magic before he dies to his son. As far as I could gather, it is merely personal preference in these cases that decides the line of inheritance.

183 The belief in magic is, however, quite universal. Everyone
799 appears not only to use magic on the appropriate occasions,

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but also to sincerely believe in it. This is one social pattern in which everyone seems to participate.

Kinship patterns of behaviour have always been supposed to be most rigid, but these, too, on close examination, reveal many variations, which appear to be based mainly on individual desires and temperamental differences. It happens but rarely that a man marries his mother's brother's daughter (the preferred marriage), but he does follow the pattern sufficiently to usually marry someone in the generation below him. But there are even exceptions to this. One man in Lesu married a woman in the generation above him—his mother's mother's brother's daughter, who is in the same generation as his mother. There are many reasons for the non-marriage of the cross-cousin's daughter. She may be married already; the parents of either her or the man may have arranged another betrothal very early in their infancy; or either the girl or the man may simply prefer another mate.

Again, there is the pattern of behaviour between a man and his sister which, among other things, does not permit a man to make sexual jokes about a woman in front of her brother. Yet, as has been described, the old man Towi is constantly doing just this, much to the disgust of others. Other natives, in talking about it, say that it is an unpleasant peculiarity of Towi's which they accept but cannot understand. He is a moderately important old man in his clan, but his love of what to the native would correspond to our obscenity detracts somewhat from his prestige. But he goes gaily on.

We know also from folk-tales and from stories about men who have lived recently that the incest taboo between members of the same moiety is occasionally broken. Individual desires thus sometimes break through the most rigid and the very strongest social pattern of behaviour, even though death is the penalty. Another kinship pattern is that

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Another kinship pattern is that

- 183 upon the divorce of parents a child stays with its mother.
- 586 But even to this we find an exception, as when Maso married another man, her child, a little girl, stayed with her father and his second wife. So there are modifications even in the supposedly rigid kinship patterns.

- 183 In the realm of economics it is easy to see the same kind of variations. For instance, although land is communally
- 423 owned, I found one case where the rule was circumvented to suit the needs and desires of one individual, and a payment made for the temporary private ownership of a piece of land.¹

- 183 An individual finds much expression in group-life, and
- 342 following traditional patterns of behaviour, such as dancing and wailing, but all individuals do not experience these religious emotions equally. Also, in other ways, the individual has ways of expression peculiar to himself. For instance, although all the houses of the village look alike, each with its bamboo walls, its thatched roof, and the beaten ground as a floor, yet closer observations reveal differences. A few houses have carving on the door; a few others have two rooms instead of the usual one; and others have been made particularly convenient with commodious shelves; and the owner becomes quite attached to his own house. When Pulong was ill and resting in another house, she was homesick for her own dwelling.²

- 183 We have seen how every man fishes, hunts pigs, builds
- 555 his house, and cleans the bush ground for his garden, and how every woman plants the garden and cooks; yet this seeming lack of specialization does not prevent Tukan from being more skilled than the other men at fishing and becoming known for this particular skill, nor Ongas from being able to build houses better than anyone else, and also famed for this skill, nor Pulong from becoming known for her ability to prepare taro in a special way, and Manumat

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from being an expert pig-hunter, and so on. While each individual participates in each occupation open to his sex (except that of the carver and magician, which are specialized ones), at the same time each person may express his personality by becoming more skilled in one than his neighbours, and so attaining additional prestige. 183 555

But even this desire for prestige is not completely universal, or rather it does not operate as a motive with equal strength for all individuals. In this society an individual acquires prestige mainly by being industrious and by having wealth, which he distributes at feasts for his dead relatives. 183 558
But there are some men who do not desire prestige sufficiently to fall into this general pattern. There is the lazy man who spends his time in lolling around on the beach, who is not active in communal work, and for whom the garden is not of great interest. A man like this soon becomes known for his laziness, and will fall in the esteem of the neighbours. If he is married his wife will probably divorce him, and if he is unmarried he will find it difficult to get a wife. One young buck of the village is such a lazy person that everyone says no one will marry him. Although he will be a man of no influence or importance in the community, he will not starve, and he will be able to have a more or less happy life. His family will feed him, and if they get tired the other members of the hamlet will give him food. Should they become weary there still remains the rest of the village who will see that he does not go hungry. So the burden of his support falls on the community as a whole. There are very few such lazy men, however—one or two in a village—and it is not more than the community can easily carry.

Just as industry gives a man prestige, so is generosity considered a desirable trait. And most men fit into the social pattern and are generous in their economic transactions. 183 571
But we saw how in the distribution of wealth upon the sale

● 183 of the *malanggan* (see Chapter VI), Palou, the owner of
 517 the *malanggan* sold, was not very generous in distribution of
 the payment, and how some of the members of his clan
 were so disgusted with his niggardliness that they left the
 rites early. Palou was decidedly not following the customary
 pattern, and his behaviour occasioned gossip. Later he made a
 few additional payments, but still not sufficient to make him
 a generous man. He was thus able to act according to a
 different pattern from the social one and "get away with it."

There are many individual differences which might be
 regarded as temperamental, and which the natives are
 quick to note among each other. Sevok, for instance, is a
 liar, and after I had discovered this for myself all the village
 confirmed it and said that was his reputation. Tukan,
 Manumat, and a host of others are honest, and are held in
 esteem because honesty is a desirable trait in this society,
 but Sevok, although outside this pattern, continues to live
 much as everyone else. In the same way Kaptan and Kuta
 are quarrelsome, while Palou and Sola and most everyone
 else have rather easy-going dispositions. The easily irritable
 disposition of the former man and woman is taken for
 granted, and regarded as a peculiarity of theirs. In working
 with informants, I soon discovered a great difference in
 their intelligence, and although I was not able to measure it
 accurately or make any tests, yet there seemed to me to be
 about the same degree of difference in intelligence between
 natives of New Ireland as there is among us. Constant work
 with many members of Lesu and the near-by villages as
 informants made it quite clear which ones were the most
 intelligent. Natives are also not only aware of differences
 among themselves, but they are extraordinarily quick to
 get individual differences among whites and uncannily
 correct in their judgments.

183 The expression of jealousy, and apparently the feeling of
 152 it too, is another temperamental or personality trait which

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differs from individual to individual, and which is an interesting variant from the usual social pattern. Extra-marital relationships are the accepted social rule, and I heard of no relatively young married man or woman who did not follow this pattern, and therefore, logically, one would not expect to find jealousy. But jealous fights occur frequently. One woman, Tungat, fought another woman to whom her husband was paying attention. Lumaeris beat his wife because he was jealous of the favours she was conferring on another man. Other men and women express no jealousy and seem to feel none, accepting the social pattern as a matter of course. But always there are those who do not.

In a similar way does married life vary in its tenor. While wife-beating is the rule in all marriages, the general tenor and attitudes in marriage differ. There is the affectionate and sympathetic life in some marriages, as that of Ongas and Pulong, as contrasted with the endless and petty bickering between Malala and Kaptan. It is true that all marriages are according to the same patterns, but each varies according to the personality of the mates, much as they do in our own society.

In Lesu, while each individual identifies himself with the group, the family, clan, moiety, etc., and is a part of it, yet at the same time each individual is also unique from other individuals, and he is able to express his uniqueness or individuality, whether it be a special skill in fishing, a natural wit and gaiety, a tolerant or a jealous attitude. He participates in the social pattern, but not exclusively in any other pattern. Sometimes he can express himself at no cost to the social pattern, and at other times he is in opposition to it. But the point is that he is able to express his personal idiosyncrasies, his own temperament, even his non-conforming—to a certain degree¹—and still remain a part of the group.

¹ But, of course, such non-conformity, as a breach of incest taboo, is not tolerated and is punished by death.

183 A more psychological study might observe the same behaviour from the point of view of the individual and with regard to whether the behaviour had as its referent the clan (or moiety), the family, or the individual himself as an entity apart from any of these groupings. The degree to which the individual integrated all the patterns would vary from person to person. This study has not been made on such a psychological basis. The question is merely raised as another way of looking at the same problem. For this Melanesian society does not bend every individual into exactly the same rigid mould. Instead it is a plastic configuration, setting, it is true, the general social pattern, but at the same time elastic enough to allow the individual to move fairly freely within it, and to even set his own pattern to a certain degree if he so chooses.

MORTUARY RITES IN NEW IRELAND

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the payments are ritually made to the owners of the pigs which were consumed at the feast, to the dancers, and to those who carried the corpse to the grave. In each case it is a close clan relative, a son, or mother's sister's son, a mother, or a mother's brother who makes the payments. It is never the surviving consort. While one person, such as a son, is considered responsible for the feast, he is assisted by other members of his clan (which is the same as that of the dead person). At the funeral of the old woman, Maling, there were fifteen pigs, all contributed, or rather paid for, by the members of her clan. Her mother's sister's son contributed three, and each one of the other clan relatives one. Most of these pigs were purchased from other people, regardless of clan or moiety, and it was to these people that the payments were made. The man making the payment held up a piece of *tsera* (shell currency) and called out the name of the man or woman to whom he was paying it and mentioned also what the payment was for. At another funeral there were ten pigs and a total payment of 39 *tsera* made for them, 32 out of the 39 being paid by clan relatives of the dead person. The remaining 7 were paid by the following three people, her husband, the chief (whose father was of the same clan as the dead woman); and another man who was of the same moiety, but of a different clan from the dead woman. This man was unmarried and most of his clan relatives were dead. He was a classificatory brother of the dead woman and she had frequently given him food. His contribution now of two *tsera* for a small pig was considered as a reciprocal gift to her. The general rule is that clan relatives pay for all the pigs and services. The exceptions just noted merely indicate that this primitive society is, like all societies, flexible in carrying out its rules.

The officiating clan relative also makes the payment to the dancers and pall-bearers.

The taro for the feast is contributed by all the women of the hamlet and the neighbouring hamlets, the clan relatives bringing a little bit more than the others, but in the matter of taro there is no fine distinction drawn as in the case of payment for pigs. Every woman brings the taro from her garden, and it involves no question of payment. Taro is never sold on any occasion, but pigs are a common object of trade.